

Message Text

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10
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

ARA-06 EUR-12 /074 W
----- 070996

R 281430Z JUL 76
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2301
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DURBAN 0367

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MILI, PFOR, SF, MZ
SUBJECT: STRAFING OF SOUTH AFRICAN SHIP

REF: DURBAN 352, 356; MAPUTO 848

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. DURBAN PRESS JULY 28 ADVANCED A NEW THEORY ON REASON FOR ATTACK ON SA FREIGHTER LIMPOPO. CITING UNSPECIFIED "MAPUTO SOURCES", NATAL MERCURY CLAIMED SHIP MAY HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BECAUSE IT WAS ACTUALLY PORTUGUESE OWNED AND HAD FAILED TO CALL AT MAPUTO JULY 24. A JOHANNESBURG PORTUGUESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, O SECULO, REPORTEDLY ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE LIMPOPO WAS OWNED BY PORTUGUESE FINANCIER ANTONIO CHAMPALIMAUD THROUGH ONE OF HIS COMPANIES, PARCERIA MARITIMA DO XAI-XAI. NATAL MERCURY QUOTED "RELIABLE SOURCES" AS SAYING ATTACKING PLANE WAS FLOWN BY THREE TOP FRELIMO MILITARY FIGURES (ALL PORTUGUESE), ONE OF WHOM WAS NAMED AS FORMER PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT JACINTO VELOSO WHO HAD DEFECTED TO FRELIMO IN 1966. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT PHOTO-GRAPHS OF ATTACKING PLANE WHICH WERE HANDED OVER TO SA NAVY (DURBAN 352) HAD BEEN UNDEREXPOSED AND WERE USELESS.

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WM BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. MURRAY GRINDROD, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF UNICORN LINES, CONFIDED TO CG JULY 28 THAT HIS SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANY IS REAL OWNER OF LIMPOPO AS WELL AS FOUR OTHER VESSELS UTILIZED IN MOZAMBIQUE TRADE BUT REGISTERED UNDER PANAMANIAN FLAG. GRINDROD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THESE COASTERS HAD BEEN PLACED UNDER PANAMANIAN FLAG IN ORDER TO AVOID PROBLEMS IN MOZAMBIQUE HARBORS WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM USE OF SA FLAG AND DURBAN HOMEPORT. AS REPORTED DURBAN 356, LIMPOPO HAD PROMPTLY BEEN RELOADED IN DURBAN AND IS NOW LYING OUTSIDE MAPUTO HARBOR WAITING TO DISCHARGE APPROX 500 TONS OF CARGO. GRINDROD SAID THAT AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION WITH HIS DIRECTORS, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT BEST WAY TO SHOW GOOD FAITH AND REFUTE ANY IDEAS ABOUT PORTUGUESE OWNERSHIP WAS TO SEND SHIP BACK TO MOZAMBIQUE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY INQUIRING OF FRELIMO AUTHORITIES RE REASONS FOR INCIDENT. THIS IS TO BE DONE JULY 28 BY UNICORN'S MAPUTO AGENT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH WHOEVER REPRESENTS PANAMANIAN INTERESTS IN MOZAMBIQUE. GRINDROD INQUIRED WHETHER US EMBASSY THERE REPRESENTS PANAMA. I REPLIED I DID NOT THINK SO BUT WOULD CHECK.

3. GRINDROD SAID HE WISHED TO BE CLEAR THAT UNICORN WAS ONLY APPROACHING FRELIMO AUTHORITIES FOR "CLARIFICATION", NOT MAKING PROTEST. UNICORN'S TOP PRIORITY WAS TO PRESERVE OPERATING ACCESS TO MOZAMBIQUE WHICH IS STILL PROFITABLE ELEMENT OF FIRM'S BUSINESS. GRINDROD SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING INFORMING FRELIMO AUTHORITIES THAT HIS SHIPS ARE REALLY SOUTH AFRICAN OWNED.

FARBER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: SHIPS, REFUGEES, PRESS COMMENTS, AIR COMBAT OPERATIONS, NATALIA M/V, LIMPOPO M/V
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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